

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Hada Fong-ha Jeong. I am a resident of New Haven, CT. I am also a healthcare providing volunteer at the HAVEN Free Clinic and a postdoctoral associate from the department of anesthesiology at Yale School of Medicine.

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I have been a volunteering program facilitator providing psychoeducation services to my patients at the department of behavioral health at the HAVEN Free Clinic for more than 2 years. These psychoeducation programs are mainly designed for immigrants who may be experiencing stress or sadness, to help them work on reducing that stress before it gets in the way of living their life or to depression. The overall goal of these programs is to give my patients tools to help them deal with difficulties in their life and prevent them from depression.

Many of my patients are uninsured, undocumented, have children under the age of 19, who are also undocumented from families of mixed immigration status. My experience providing care to my immigrant patients without health insurance is that my patients and their children are constantly in fear of getting hurt because of the concerns and worries of the strenuous cost that would be put on their family if they, or their young children, seek medical attentions. It has been one of their key stressors. I also concern that this perception of not seeking medical attention due to the strenuous cost when one truly needs and deserves, may have unintentionally passed on to their next generation.

When a person is sick, health insurance should not be the contributing factor when one considers seeking medical care. Healthcare should be available to all people who are sick in CT, and in the USA, regardless of one's age, race, sex, or legal status. If this bill passes, it will help my patients and my team in terms of energy and effort to recover the damage caused. And therefore, I urge attention of this matter. I care about this because our patients and their family living in the US deserve to be treated equally as humans.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all community members in CT regardless of age or status.

Thank you for your time listening,
Hada Fong-ha Jeong

Resident of New Haven, CT